



United States Department of Agriculture

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# Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan Revision

## November Public Workshop Report



Forest Service Manti-La Sal National Forest

April 2017

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## Content

Executive Summary .....	4
Overview of Meetings.....	4
<i>Objective of the Meetings</i> .....	4
<i>Agenda</i> .....	5
<i>Workshop Format</i> .....	5
1. Assessment Station .....	6
<i>Assessment Station Process</i> .....	6
<i>Summary of Assessment Topics</i> .....	12
<i>Summary of Assessment Topics by Resource Area</i> .....	14
2. The Species of Conservation Concern Station.....	18
<i>Species of Conservation Concern Process</i> .....	18
<i>Summary of SCC Topics</i> .....	19
3. The Wilderness Evaluation Station.....	21
<i>Wilderness Evaluation Process</i> .....	21
<i>Summary of Wilderness Evaluation Topics</i> .....	22
4. Suitability of Coal Analysis Station .....	22
<i>Suitability of Coal Analysis Process</i> .....	22
<i>Summary of Coal Comments</i> .....	22
5. Values of the Forest .....	23
6. Summary and Next Steps .....	24

## Attachments

- Attachment 1. Assessment Table Public Comments
- Attachment 2. SCC Handouts
- Attachment 3. Wilderness Evaluation Handouts
- Attachment 4. Coal Suitability Analysis Handouts

## Executive Summary

In November 2016, the Manti-La Sal National Forest hosted two public workshops in Monticello and Price, Utah. During these meetings participants were afforded time to have in-depth conversations with specialists around a series of Forest Plan Revision topics including the Assessment, Species of Conservation Concern (SCC), Wilderness, and Analysis of Coal Suitability.

The Forest held fourteen public open houses during July, August, and September to kick off plan revision and share information on what would be addressed during the Assessment Phase. Many of the workshop participants attended previous open houses. While the open houses were intended to share information around the planning process, the ‘world café’ approach utilized at the workshops focused on dialogue and engaging participants around each topic area. This report is a review of the information and public comments that were generated from the breakout group discussions. A complete Appendix of materials shared and comments received are provided as attachments and are referenced throughout the document.

## Overview of the meetings

In total, 58 people attended the two November workshops. During the course of the workshops over 200 comments were collected from the attendees. Over 95 percent of attendees were from Utah, with over 90 percent living in rural communities near the Forest. This high level of local participation is indicative of an engaged local population that cares about the management of their public lands and the resources of the Forest.

**Objectives of the meetings:** The sessions conducted were structured, but intentionally informal to allow for participants to interact with each other and with Forest Service representatives. The specific objectives were to:

- **Gather Input:** Provide a public venue for soliciting contributions to the assessment process, SCC, wilderness planning and coal. Public input will improve the final plan by ensuring consideration of differing viewpoints and highlighting issues brought forth from the public.
- **Foster Shared Learning Among Participants:** Encourage stakeholders and other general public participants to talk with each other and share their observations about various planning topics. Shared learning helps participants offer joint solutions and better understand the issues, planning requirements and process for plan development.
- **Build and Reinforce Positive Relationships:** Establish the Forest Service as one voice of many in the planning process. Encourage relationships to form and reinforce relationships both horizontally and vertically. Strong relationships are the key to future collaboration.

## Agenda

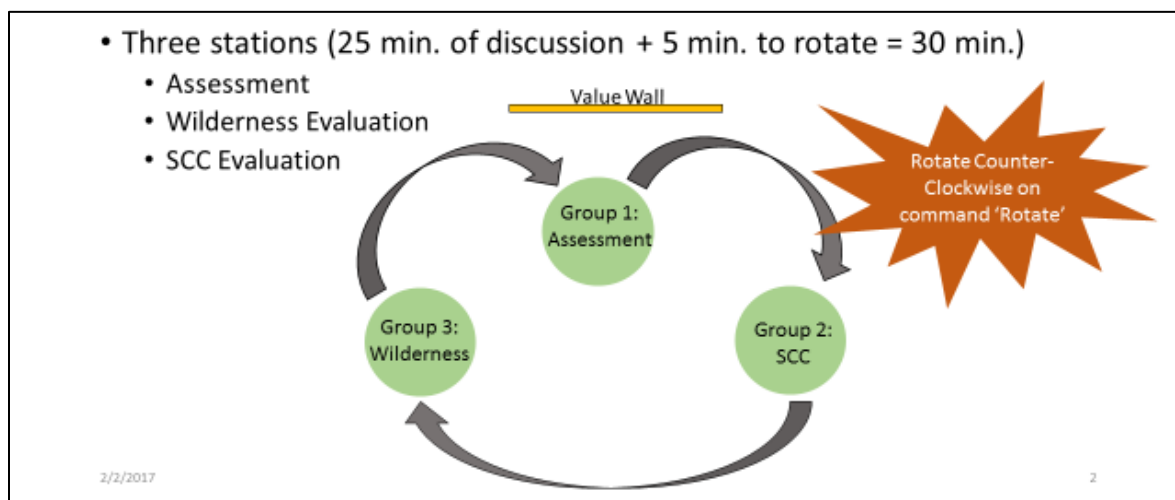
**Table 1. Agenda Used for Both Public Workshops**

Time	Topic	Presenter
5:00-5:15	Welcome	Forest Supervisor District Ranger
5:15-5:30	Overview	Planning Lead
5:30-7:00	Small Group Breakout Sessions	
7:00-7:30	Report out and Farewell	Forest Service Presenters

## Workshop Format

To facilitate dialogue around each of the resource areas, three tables were hosted at the workshops covering the **Assessment, SCC and the Wilderness Evaluation** process. Participants rotated between these tables in 30 minute intervals to allow for Forest specialists to facilitate a dialogue around a series of questions designed to engage participants and provide feedback. Other areas were set up for comments covering the Wilderness Assessment on-line collaboration tool, Analysis of Coal Suitability, and Values of the Forest.

**Graphic 1. Format Used for Group Rotations**



## 1. The Assessment Station

### Assessment Station Process

The purpose of the Assessment station was to walk participants through a process similar to what Forest Specialists go through in developing their reports by resource area including: gathering information pertaining to Existing Conditions; identifying Historic, Current and Future trends; identifying Stressors and Drivers that affect resources, and providing Management Recommendations to mitigate threats to Forest resources.

The final Assessment Report is structured around specific assessment topics as outlined in the Forest Service Handbook and Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR Part 219.6). The Manti-La Sal is utilizing 15 different assessment topics and each topic can affect multiple resource areas. For example, Assessment Topic 1.

*Terrestrial ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and watersheds*, covers several associated resource areas including: wildlife/aquatics, range, vegetation, hydrology, soils, fuels, and timber/silviculture. Participants were provided a list of assessment topics and asked to select one or more to provide feedback on. For a complete list of responses see Attachment 1. A table of assessment Topics and associated Resource Areas is provided on the following page.



November Public Workshop Layout - Monticello

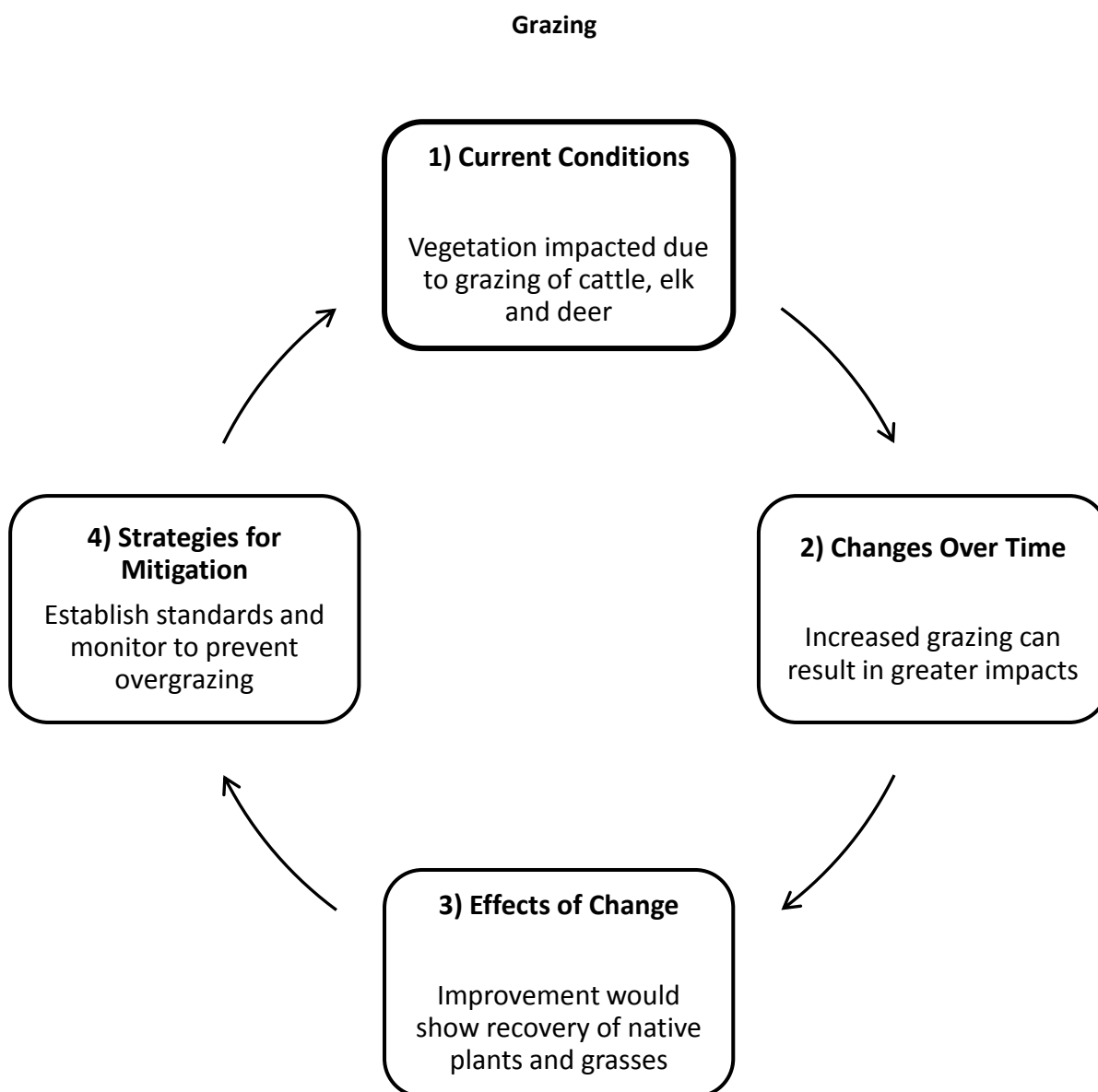
**Table 2. Assessment Topics**

	<b>Assessment Topic (36 CFR 219.6 (b))</b>	<b>Associated Resource Area</b>
1	Terrestrial ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and watersheds	wildlife, range, vegetation, hydrology, soils, fuels, timber/silviculture
2	Air, soil, and water resources and quality	air, soils, hydrology, wildlife, range, vegetation, fuels, timber/silviculture
3	System drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as natural succession, wildland fire, invasive species, and climate change; and the ability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems on the plan area to adapt to change	air, soils, hydrology, wildlife, range, vegetation, fuels, timber/silviculture, cultural/heritage, recreation, minerals, social/economics
4	Baseline assessment of carbon stocks	timber/silviculture, range, fuels, vegetation, wildlife, soils
5	Threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, and potential species of conservation concern present in the plan area	wildlife, vegetation
6	Social, cultural, and economic conditions	social/economics, recreation, cultural/heritage, engineering, minerals, range, timber/silviculture, wildlife, fuels
7	Benefits people obtain from the NFS planning area (ecosystem services)	social/economics, recreation, cultural/heritage, engineering, minerals, range, timber/silviculture, wildlife, fuels
8	Multiple uses and their contributions to local, regional, and national economies	social/economics, recreation, range, timber/silviculture, hydrology, wildlife, vegetation, engineering
9	Recreation settings, opportunities and access, and scenic character	recreation, social/economic, cultural/heritage, engineering
10	Renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources	minerals/geology, social/economics
11	Infrastructure (recreational facilities and transportation and utility corridors)	engineering, social/economics
12	Areas of tribal importance	cultural/heritage, social/economics
13	Cultural and historic resources and uses	cultural/heritage, social/economics
14	Land status and ownership, use, and access patterns	lands, engineering
15	Existing designated areas located in the plan area including wilderness and wild and scenic rivers and potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas	recreation, lands

Once participants selected their assessment topics they were provided time to answer the following questions around that topic:

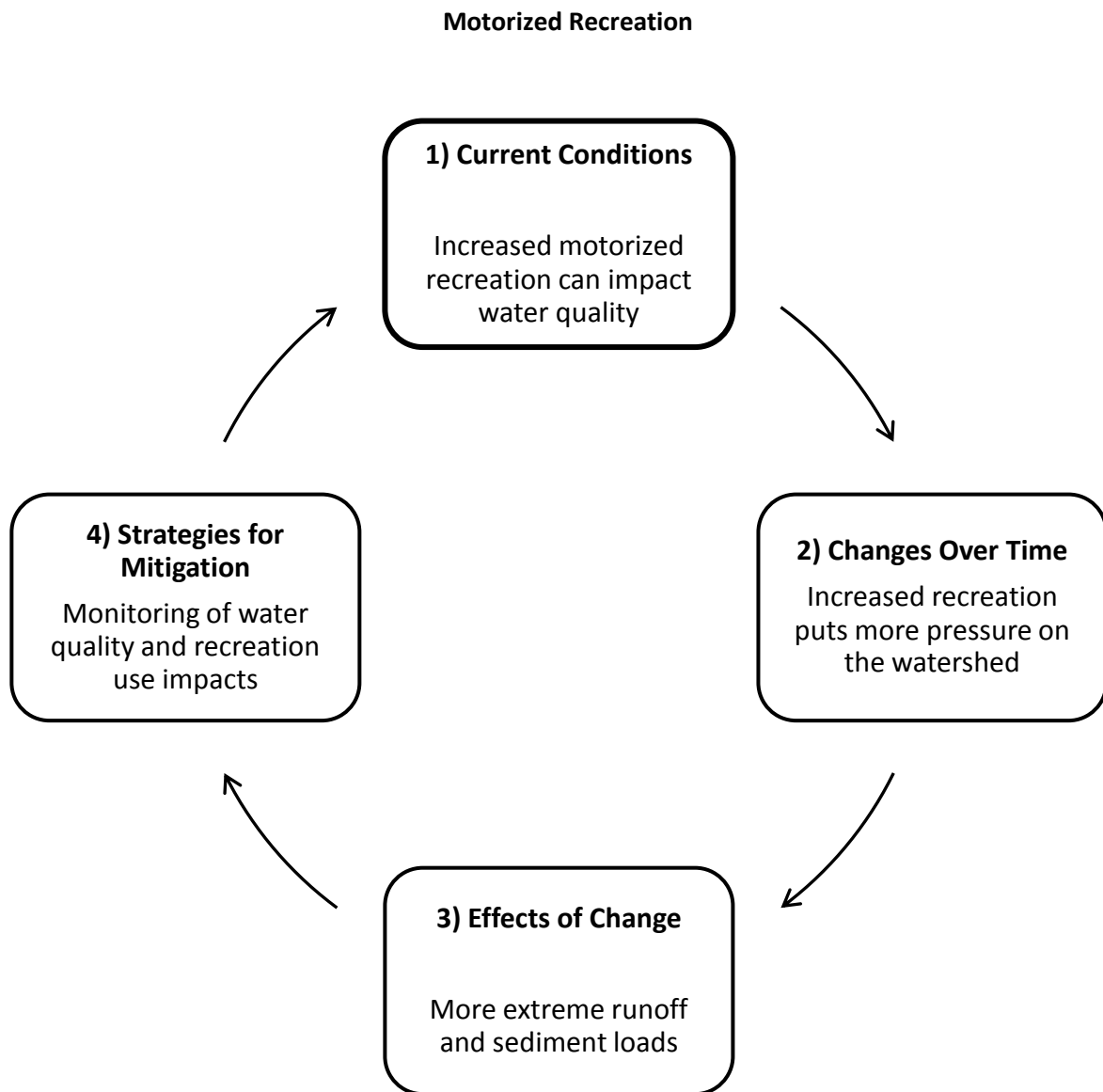
- 1) How would you describe the current condition of your favorite Forest resource(s)?
- 2) What changes over time have you seen regarding your favorite resource(s), and why are they important?
- 3) What sorts of things would you expect to see if the condition of your favorite resource(s) was improving or declining?
- 4) What tools and strategies might we use to address negative trends or conditions related to your favorite resource(s)?

**Graphic 2. Example Response to Assessment Table Questions**



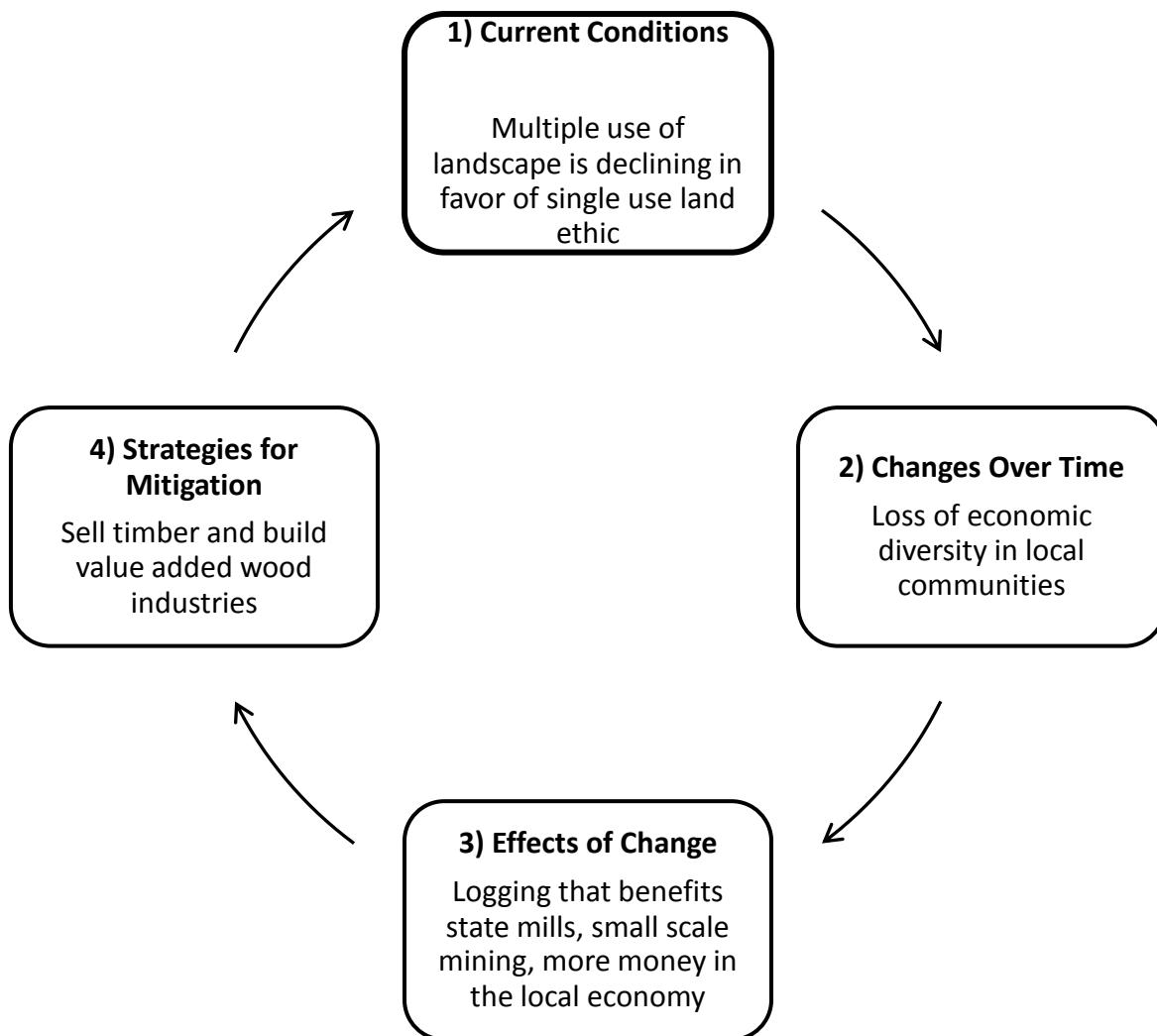


**Graphic 3. Example Response to Assessment Table Questions**

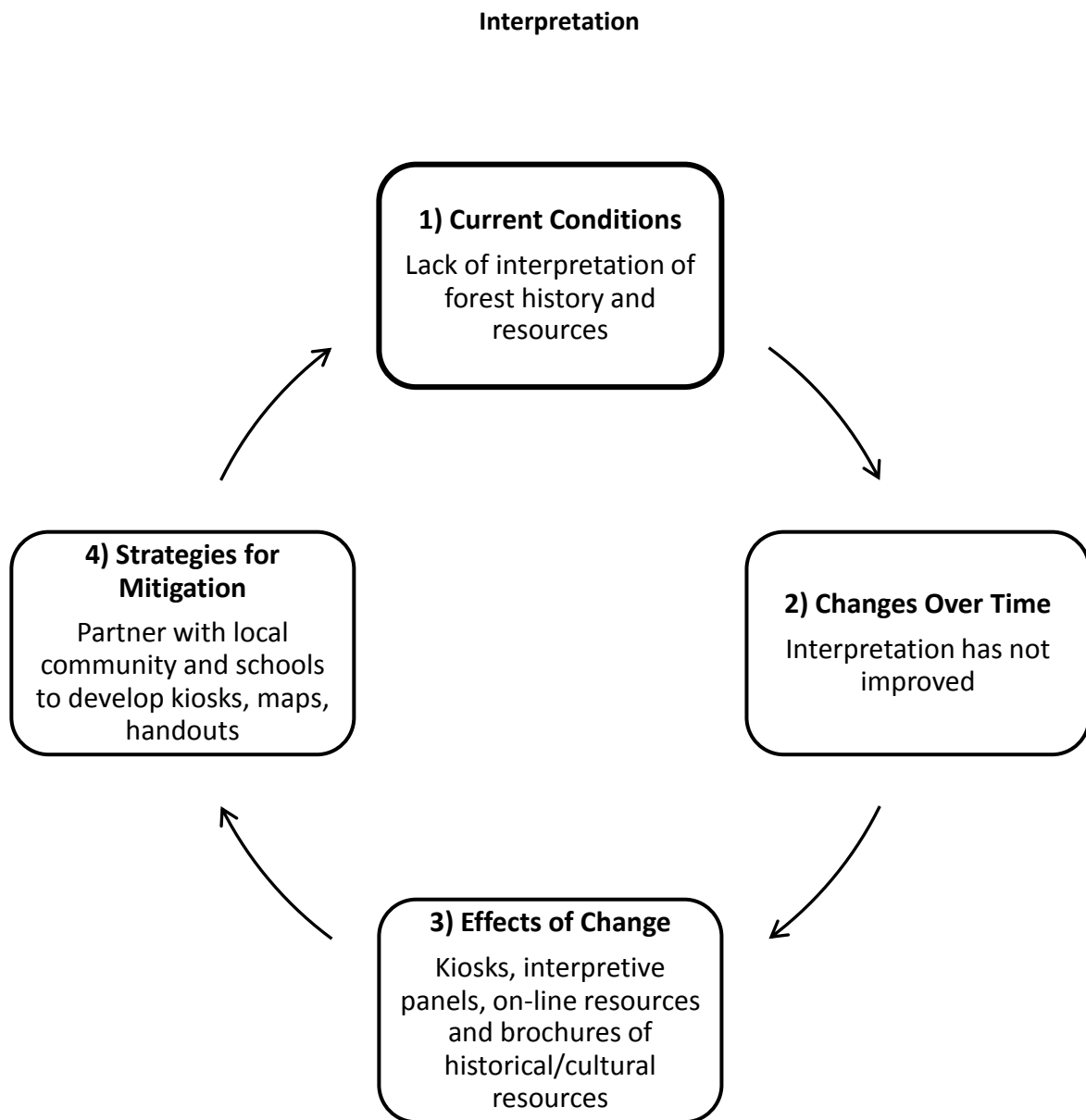


**Graphic 4. Example Response to Assessment Table Questions**

**Multiple Use & the Local Economy**



**Graphic 5. Example Response to Assessment Table Questions**



## Summary of Assessment Topics

A total of 99 individual comments were received at the assessment station and each assessment topic was addressed at least once. Approximately half of the participants picked a single assessment topic or resource area and answered all four questions, some answered questions for more than one topic, and a handful only answered a single question, or provided a general comment around a single topic or resource area. The general areas of interest and responses are summarized below. A more thorough summary by resource area follows, and a complete index of responses can be found in Attachment 1.

### Question 1 - Current Condition

When asked to describe the current condition of their favorite forest resource, areas of interest included: road conditions/access, water resources, recreation opportunities, beetle killed trees, big game and invasive species, hunting, rangeland conditions and grazing management, and permitting for recreation, oil, gas and grazing uses.

### Question 2 - Changes Overtime

Changes observed by participants varied widely and were sometimes in direct contrast to each other with one participant describing the resource as improving and another as declining. Changes could generally be described in terms of increasing and decreasing resources or resource quality. Participants described *increases* in visitation, quality and quantity of trails, number of grazing permits, pressures on water resources, beetle killed trees, and permitting requirements for oil/gas/mineral extraction.

*Decreases* over time included access to motorized trails, livestock permits, mining leases, hunting, aspen regeneration, diversity in the local resource based economy, air and visual resource quality from mining, and maintenance of roads, trails, and campgrounds.

### Question 3 - Effects of Change

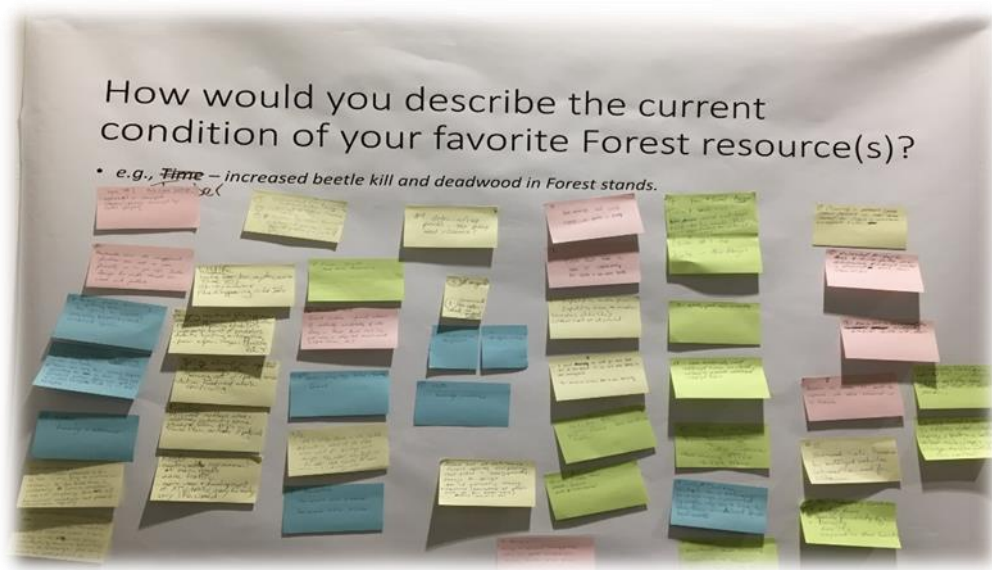
What participants would expect to see if the resource condition was improving or declining were also varied, but with fewer opposing statements. Observations that showed resources improving included increasing opportunities for motorized uses, increased ground cover to hold water and soil run off, diversity in plant composition, thriving aspen communities and other native species, improved game populations, increasing economic activity in local communities due to logging and small scale mining, an increase in grazing, wildfire controls, and streamlined permitting processes for mineral leases and recreation.

Participants that illustrated what they would observe if resource quality was declining described water diverted for coal mines, aspen decline, more bare soil, run-off and sediment loading, increase of fuels on the forest, decline in air quality due to oil and gas exploration, an increase of fuels on the forest due to beetle killed trees and motorized recreation on non-motorized trails.

#### Question 4 - Recommendations for Management

Approximately half of the responses included recommendations for management to mitigate negative resource trends. Recommendations included:

- *Monitoring* of water quality and sources of decline, monitoring motorized recreation and dispersed camping use numbers
- Providing *informational trainings* and discussions with mineral users regarding the permitting process, FS & BLM working together to *streamline NEPA* for mining management
- *Salvage of timber* by logging and building value added timber industries to benefit the economy, separating logging use areas from cabin use areas to minimize conflicts
- *Increase flexibility* in grazing systems allowing more rest for forage species and intensity of use, more *seeding after wildfires* for faster regeneration of ground cover
- Limiting commercial tour operations to limit over-use of trails, providing a reservation system for dispersed camping sites, decrease overall miles of trails in favor of high quality trails near population centers to manage maintenance needs
- *Designate* Research Natural Area's, Wilderness areas and Species of Conservation Concern to protect resources, and remove mountain goats from the La Sal Mountains.

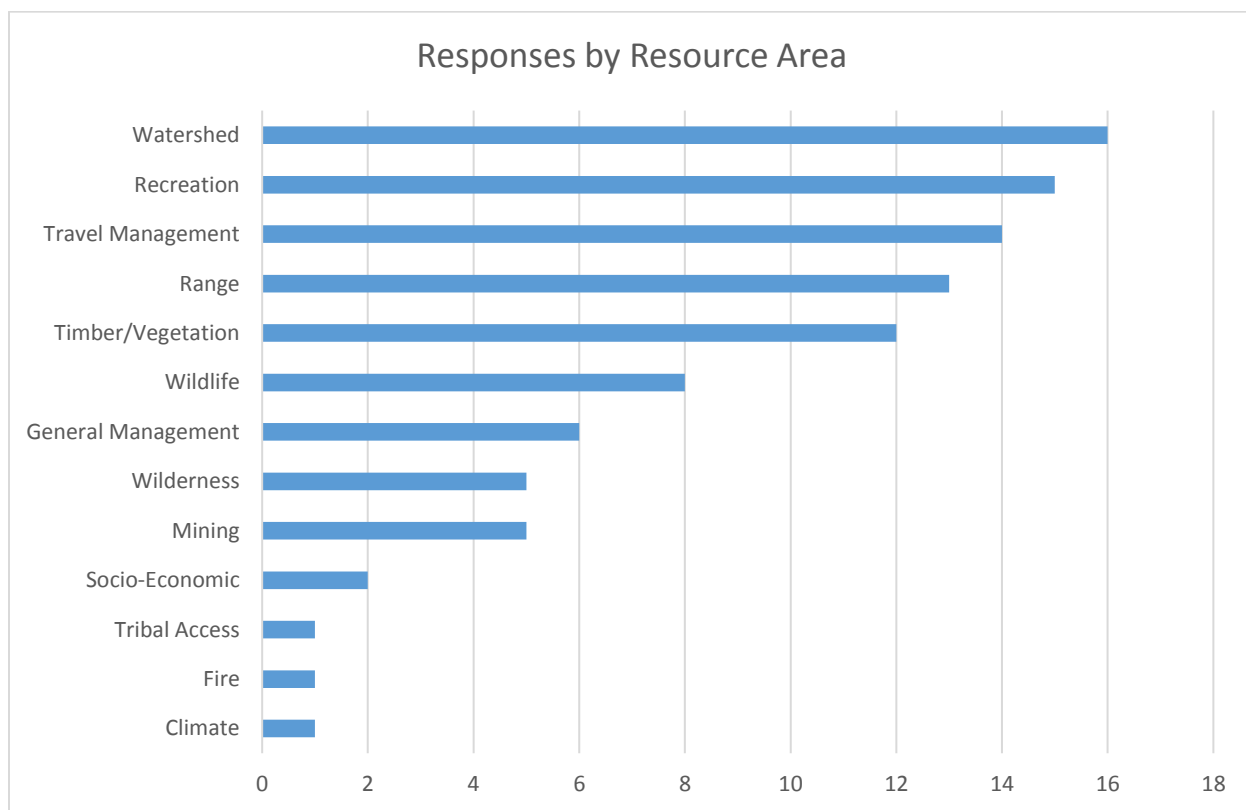


Assessment Table Comments Submitted during the Monticello Workshop

## Summary of Assessment Topic Responses Categorized by Resource Area

As shown in the Assessment Topics Table, many resource areas such as water, recreation, and socio-economics, were covered by multiple topics. We will discuss responses collected at the public meetings by resource areas as a whole. To reference the original assessment topic areas refer back to Table 2. Every topic was commented on at least once. The graph below shows that watershed, recreation, travel management and range were the topic areas commented on the most.

**Graphic 6. Assessment Topic Response Bar Chart**



### Watersheds

Watersheds as a resource area was one of the most popular issues participants commented on during the assessment exercise with more than 20 comments in total. A watershed is the total land area drained by a stream or river system; often used to define the scope and scale for planning and management of natural resources. Participant comments were very consistent and shared similar concerns regarding the decline in watershed health due to increasing recreation, grazing near springs and streams, withdrawals of water for mining operations, and increasing sediment loads into water bodies.

Two participants noted that a contributing factor to erosion and sediment loads was a loss of vegetation around tributary habitats citing grazing and recreation as contributing factors. They recommended re-seeding after fires to assist in soil control and utilizing an initial mix of fast growing plant species and then a secondary mix with plant species intended to be the final vegetation.

Several comments regarding watersheds also included concerns over beetle killed trees increasing the risk for wildfires and the subsequent impacts to water quality. Others noted development and uses on lands adjacent to the forest as having potential impacts to watersheds.

Recommended management actions include: moving grazing allotments away from springs and streams, working with grazing permittees and local communities to fence off springs and create alternative locations for cattle to access water; educate recreationists to camp away from water sources and discourage leaving waste; and maintaining forest service dams and lakes for safety and recreation.

## **Recreation**

Recreation was the other most popular topic area for participants with over 20 responses. Recreation encompasses everything from camping to hunting access to cabin ownership. Comments were almost exclusively focused on the negative resource impacts of increasing numbers in Forest users with recommendations for mitigating impacts and improving visitor experiences.

Areas of concern include: poor road access to dispersed campsites; the maintenance and condition of dispersed sites including erosion, rock exposure, and impacts from cattle; and two participants expressed concern about the noise impacts of OHV use near primitive, non-motorized recreation areas.

Trails represented about one quarter of the recreation comments including praise for the quality and continued maintenance of OHV trails, "it's the best OHV (*area*) I know of," and a desire for more diverse and maintained non-motorized trails and trailheads.

A lack of interpretation of historical resources on the Monticello Unit was noted. The commenter recommended utilizing on-line resources such as downloadable pamphlets and maps in addition to kiosks at trailheads, and partnering with local schools and recreation clubs to develop and distribute materials.

A cabin owner recommended that logging areas be separated from cabin use areas to minimize impacts to the owner experience including rutting of roads and stumps left near cabin sites.

One participant expressed concern over increasing impacts from large groups utilizing campsites and trails and recommended revisiting group permits and posting notices at trailheads when group camps are utilized.

## **Travel Management**

Some participants focused their comments on travel management and roads on the Forest. The majority were expressing concern over pressure of increasing use and the need for continued, and increasing maintenance of roads. There was a comment about a general decrease in access for hunting due to private property issues and the closing off of canyons.

Recommendations include: providing loop opportunities to minimize out and back travel; increased signage and developed trails to minimize off-trail use; and increased maintenance of roads to designated camp spots.

Several comments focused on the importance of public involvement in travel management due to the impacts to users. Increased education about the review process would help eliminate concern that trails are closed without “justification,” and help users understand the motivating factors behind road closures. One participant suggested that due to the number of trails in the Abajo Mountains, it was especially critical to involve the public in travel management for that area.

## **Range**

Range comments were generally split between those who viewed range vegetation conditions as stable or improved, and available for increased livestock AUM’s, and those who felt that range vegetation conditions were negatively impacted due to current livestock AUM’s, including erosion in riparian areas and impacts to trails and campgrounds. Those who described the range conditions as stable, or improved, due to successful range management practices sought increases in livestock AUM’s as indicated in the 1986 Forest Plan.

Recommendations for mitigating negative impacts from grazing included flexibility in the timing of grazing systems allowing more rest for forage species, utilizing reference study areas to create standards that prevent overgrazing, and rezoning permitting areas to keep cattle out of mountain passes and the top of watersheds.

Improved conditions were described as seeing increased ground cover, including native grasses, stable stream banks, and diverse plant composition. Declining conditions were described as decreased plant cover and diversity, and degraded stream banks.

## **Wilderness**

Five comments were received pertaining to wilderness areas and were primarily focused on recommendations for the wilderness evaluation process. These comments are also incorporated in to the wilderness evaluation section of this document. The burn area on South Mountain and the greater Sinbad Mesa on the Moab Ranger District were recommended for consideration as wilderness. One person noted concern that an increase in wilderness designations would result in motorized use being pushed out of newly designated wilderness areas and on to currently non-motorized trails. Another recommended that the evaluation of road-less areas and wilderness potential should be done free of “artificial boundaries” such as state, county and agency lines.

## **Mining**

Several comments were documented regarding permitting of mining and oil and gas exploration on Forest Service lands. One participant was concerned with increasing impacts of permitting requirements including archeology, vegetation, water and soils analyses that appear to result in untimely delays. Another noted a desire for a “fair” ability to obtain special use permits for exploration in a timely manner suggesting that it was getting “more difficult to permit temporary roads that will be reclaimed.”

There was a recommendation that the Forest Service maintain its role as a surface management agency and defer to BLM for mineral development and extraction. One participant noted an increase of “visual pollution” from the extraction industry and a decline in air quality due to oil and gas exploration.



Recommendations for management considerations include: developing a more uniform application of NEPA between BLM and the Forest Service; informational trainings with mineral users on the process for special use permitting; and streamlining mineral management processes.

## **Wildlife**

The comments received on wildlife issues represented the diversity of concerns that can be found on the Forest. Two participants recommended removing Mountain Goats from the La Sal Mountains, noting effects to alpine plants and utilizing citizen science to monitor impacts. These same participants expressed concern over lack of protection for cutthroat trout. One participant noted a decline in bear, lion, coyote, elk and pika numbers since the 1980's and recommended that federal agencies manage predator species. It was also suggested that Research Natural Areas, Wilderness, and the protection and monitoring of all sensitive species should be utilized to protect wildlife. One person recommended the reintroduction of wolves to balance elk, deer, and coyote populations. Another person expressed there was room for improvement in managing game and non-game species. Lastly there was the comment to keep game animals a high priority when developing plans

## **Timber and Vegetation**

Participants provided comments on timber suggesting that removal of beetle killed trees in fire damaged areas, through logging, be a priority. Comments also addressed there is an increase of management issues related to invasive vegetation. The decline in aspen, and a slowing of aspen regeneration was also of concern to participants that commented on vegetation.

## **Economy**

Two participants highlighted the importance of resource related industries, including logging and mining, to nearby communities. Observed changes over time included loss of economic diversity in local communities as timber and mining operations decreased resulting in fewer high paying jobs and fewer family owned businesses. Suggestions for improvement included selling timber and building value-added wood industries.

## **General Comments**

A few comments received were best categorized as pertaining to general management and observations which could be summarized into the following:

Forest resources are in good condition but could improve with additional management

There should be more staff on the ground instead of the office

All citizens should be given equal weight in management decisions

## 2. The Species of Conservation Concern Station



*Participants at the SCC Table. November Public Workshop in Price*

### Species of Conservation Concern Process (SCC)

Species of Conservation Concern (SCC 219.9(c)) are defined as species “...other than federally recognized threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, that (are) known to occur in the plan area and for which the regional forester has determined that the best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species’ capacity to persist over the long-term in the plan area.” The 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.7(c)(3)) requires that the Regional Forester identify species of conservation concern for the plan area as part of the Forest Plan Revision process. In keeping with these directives, resource specialists on the Manti-La Sal National Forest and the Intermountain Region Office (RO) are working to develop a list of SCC for inclusion in the Forest Plan. Public comments will be incorporated into the process.

Plant, animal and insect species on the Forest were processed through a set of directive based criteria to develop a proposed list for consideration. For example, species were required to be native and known to occur in the plant area, have a NatureServe Status as Critically Imperiled or Imperiled, and according to Best Available Scientific Information (BASI) be able to demonstrate substantial concern about the species capacity to persist over the long term in the plan area (See Attachment 2 for the complete process and review criteria).

The current proposed list of recommended species are being reviewed by both the RO and the public during the Assessment Phase of Forest Plan Revision. The Regional Forester will consider the Forest’s recommendations and public comments before drafting a decision on which species will be included on the list of Species of Conservation Concern in the Forest Plan. The identified list will be taken through the remainder of the plan revision development and NEPA process. The SCC list is a dynamic document that will change in response to species’ status on the Forest.

**Table 3. Potential SCC List recommended by the Forest for Review by the Public at the November Workshop**

<b>Taxa</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Must/Should Consider for SCC</b>	<b>MLNF Recommendation</b>
Amphibian	<i>Anaxyrus boreas</i>	Boreal Toad	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Bird	<i>Leucosticte atrata</i>	Black Rosy-finch	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Bird	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	Greater-sage Grouse	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Bird	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	No*	<b>Yes</b>
Fish	<i>Lepidomeda aliciae</i>	Southern Leatherside Chub	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Fish	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i>	Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Fish	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii utah</i>	Bonneville Cutthroat Trout	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Insect	<i>Sweltsa cristata</i>	Utah Sallfly	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Mammal	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Townsend's Big-eared Bat	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Mammal	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	Fringed Myotis	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Plant	<i>Oreoxis bakeri</i>	Baker's Oreoxis	Yes	<b>Yes</b>
Plant	<i>Erigeron mancus</i>	La Sal Daisy	Yes	<b>Yes</b>

## Summary of SCC Comments

The primary purpose of the SCC table was to share the draft of potential SCC lists and identify species that the public would, or would not, like to see included. Background materials describing SCC, the process for selecting them, and the tools for selection including BASI were available to the public both through the Forest website<sup>1</sup> and at public meetings. Handouts included the following which can be found in Attachment 2:

- BASI Handout
- Potential SCC Review Procedural Report
- SCC Criteria Flowchart
- SCC Selection Process Flowchart
- SCC Poster (on display at meetings) – What are SCC and How are they Determined?

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mantilasal/landmanagement/planning>

Seven questions were asked to participants to facilitate this dialogue which included:

1. Do you have any questions about what SCC are and how they are selected?
2. What non-game species (terrestrial or aquatic) or plant species on the Forest do you value the most? Why?
3. Based on our current recommendations, what do you think of the species currently being recommended for consideration? Do you think there are any species that should be added or removed? Why?
4. Do you have any resource conflict concerns that you feel might be impacted by SCC?
5. What are potential threats to the recommended potential SCC that you think need to be recognized?
6. What are some recommendations for mitigating these potential threats?
7. What are your thoughts and/or concerns about having designated SCC species included as a component of the Forest Plan?

### **Recommendations for Additions/Removal from the Public**

#### **Addition to the SCC List:**

- American Pika
- Astragalus isleyi
- Greenback Cutthroat Trout
- Bighorn Sheep
- Black footed ferret
- Sage Grouse
- Wild Horses
- All species should be protected

#### **Removal:**

- Peregrine Falcon
- Cutthroat Trout
- Sage Grouse
- Astragalus isleyi
- All species should be removed

**Resource conflict concerns** that could be affected by SCC included: recreation, access to roads and facilities, use of species/management area, impacts to grazing, Big Horn Sheep, Mountain Goats, Sage Grouse, fire, water resources, conflicts with non-native species.

**Potential threats** to proposed SCC included: recreation, fire, grazing, climate trends, and lack of active management.

**Recommended mitigations** to potential threats to proposed SCC included: research, management choices, visitor education, timber sales/removal of dead trees, more local input, and focus on watershed health.

### **Questions from participants about the SCC Process**

Participant inquiries were answered in person at public meetings and are documented in Attachment 2.

- How does the Forest Service vet BASI?
- Did the forest consider other entities recommendations?
- How did the list go from the original to current proposed?
- What does SCC designation mean for Forest Plan Revision?
- Are SCC species the same as threatened and endangered?

### 3. The Wilderness Evaluation Station

#### Wilderness Evaluation Process

As part of the Forest Plan Revision, the Forest is required by the National Forest Management Act and the Wilderness Protection Act to conduct a Wilderness Evaluation to identify areas that may be suitable for recommendation as Wilderness. The evaluation process occurs concurrently with the Forest Plan Revision, extending throughout the four-year process, and consists of four phases: Inventory, Evaluation, Analysis, and Recommendation. Public participation is important at each stage of the process.

**Phase 1 – Inventory** - The Manti-La Sal Wilderness Evaluation is currently in Phase 1 which applies three filtering criteria including size, substantially noticeable improvements, and roads to the entire Forest. Public review at this stage is intended to provide on-the-ground knowledge and corrections to the existing data and provide information on use trends. The result is a set of areas, or polygons, that are submitted for Evaluation for potential Wilderness designation in Phase 2. A summary of public comments regarding the current inventory are summarized in the following section.

**Phase 2 - Evaluation** – The recommended areas from Phase 1 are evaluated for their Wilderness Character as described in the Wilderness Act. An example of these Characteristics include ecological or geological resources of scientific, education, scenic or historical value and the opportunity for solitude.

**Phase 3 - Analysis** - During this phase the Forest selects areas to be analyzed as part of the range of alternatives in the Forest Plan Revision Environmental Impact Statement. The analysis will also describe what impacts might be expected recommending, or not recommending, an area for designation.

**Phase 4 – Recommendation** –during this final phase, the Forest Supervisor will issue a decision on whether to recommend specific areas for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Several reviews within the Department of Agriculture for the areas will follow, and ultimately Congress has reserved the authority to make the final decision on Wilderness Designation.

**The purpose** of the Wilderness Evaluation table at the November Workshops was to:

- Share information about the current status of our Wilderness Evaluation (Attachment 3)
- Share the Wilderness Inventory maps with the public and identify data discrepancies
- Answer questions about the wilderness evaluation process
- Gather public comments on what areas they would/would not like to see recommended as Wilderness

**Wilderness Inventory Maps** illustrated areas excluded from consideration due to size, substantially noticeable improvements or roads and highlighted areas which have seen significant vegetation management activities within the last 20 years, existing wilderness, roads and trails. For a copy of these maps visit the Forest Plan Revision webpage:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mantilasal/landmanagement/planning>

## Summary of Wilderness Evaluation Comments

**Comments** from participants included:

- Recommend that several areas **not be shown** on the map including: mechanical treatment areas around Joes Valley Reservoir, the gravel pit north of the Reservoir, prescribed fire areas so that they may still be considered as potential wilderness
- Recommended additions to the map: Finn Canyon road, motorized trails
- Concern that water diversions and ditches and the access to them be shown on map. Access is critical to maintaining them.
- Are state trust lands removed from the inventory?
- What are the socio-economic impacts of a wilderness designation? A special place if designated may be overrun. Is this going to be considered?
- Areas that hold wilderness potential : Candland Mountain, Canal Canyon, and Fish Creek
- Recommendation that there be no wilderness designations on the North Zone

## 4. Coal Analysis Station

### Coal Analysis Process

As part of the larger Forest Plan Revision process the Forest is also evaluating the suitability of lands on the Manti-La Sal National Forest for further consideration of coal leasing per 43 CFR 3420. The Bureau of Land Management manages all subsurface uses on the Manti-La Sal National Forest and this evaluation process is consistent with BLM policies and regulations. The Coal Evaluation Process consists of four phases. The Manti-La Sal is currently in Phase 1.

**Phase 1** – Identify areas that have coal development potential as defined by the BLM

**Phase 2** – Apply Suitability Criteria for Coal Mining identified in 43 CFR 3461 to the lands identified to have coal development potential

**Phase 3** – Evaluate lands with coal development potential for other resource values that may be locally, regionally, or nationally important, or unique, and are not included in the Suitability Criteria

**Phase 4** – Develop guidelines for protection of non-mineral resources (i.e. stipulations) for lands that will be carried forward for further consideration for coal leasing, and develop guidelines (i.e. conditions for use and protection of non-mineral resources) for coal exploration activities.

### Summary of Coal Comments

Participants were provided a handout explaining the Coal Evaluation process (Attachment 4) and given the opportunity to discuss coal resources with FS staff. No comments were received from the public at the meetings.

Participants were asked to write one statement that reflected what they valued most about the Forest and place their comments on a “value wall” at each meeting. The “value wall” provided an opportunity for participants to see their resource values in the context of other meeting participants, areas of common and diverging interests, representing the many varied uses of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. These comments were used to create the word graphic below. The more frequently the word was used, the larger the text in the graphic.

[illegible]

## 6. Summary and Next Steps

Comments received during the November workshops covered similar areas of public interest to the September public meetings but allowed for participants to explore in greater depth what occurs during the Assessment Phase of the Forest Plan and concurrent analyses, and to provide their own perspective and recommendations for inclusion.

A summary of public comments received will be incorporated in to the final Assessment report and will considered throughout the plan development process.

The Draft Assessment Report will be available for a 30 day public comment period in the Summer of 2017 and then the planning team will develop the Need for Change which will conclude Phase I – the Assessment Phase of the Plan Revision Process. Phase II incorporates the development of the Draft Forest Plan alternatives and NEPA, and then ultimately Phase III Implementation and Monitoring.

**Graphic 8. Forest Plan Revision Timeline**

